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CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Ólóir do Dhia an rna hárduib, agus ríocháin aip an dtalam deaigcoil do na dáoinib.

LUKE ii. 14.

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THE RULE OF FAITH

“WHAT must I do that I may be saved?” This is the great question which it behoves every one, to whom the sound of the everlasting Gospel has come, to ask himself, and to which every creed professes to supply an answer. To examine which of these answers is most in accordance with the revealed will of God, is the bounden duty and the inalienable privilege of every man. It is true that all Christian Churches, the Roman Catholic as well as the Reformed, agree in accepting, in a general way, the answer given by the Apostles Paul and Silas to the above question—viz., “Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved and thy house.” But when it is further inquired, in what does this belief consist? What are the doctrines which form essential and indispensable parts of the religion of Jesus? Where are these doctrines to be found? What, in short, is the rule by which our belief or *faith* is to be guided? No sooner are these additional questions proposed, than a wide diversity of opinion at once becomes apparent, and the characteristic difference between the Church of Rome and the Reformed Churches, especially the Church of these kingdoms, comes into view. The grand, fundamental distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant religion consists in this very point, that, whilst Protestants maintain that a full and perfect rule of faith is contained in the Scriptures, and that, consequently, these furnish, in and by themselves, a sufficient basis for all doctrines necessary to salvation, the Church of Rome holds that the Holy Scriptures are insufficient by themselves, and that we must admit, in addition to them, a second source, from which some essential articles of faith are derived—viz., Tradition; and that this second source is of *equal authority* with the first, and *independent* of it. The following are the authoritative statements of the Church of England and the Church of Rome, respectively, on this subject. The Church of England declares, in her sixth Article, that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite as necessary to salvation.” The Council of Trent, on the other hand, in the Decree concerning the canonical Scriptures, passed in its fourth session, “receives and venerates with *equal sentiments of piety and reverence* all the books, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, and also the *traditions* pertaining both to faith and morals, inasmuch as they [the traditions] either came from the mouth of Christ himself, or were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and have been preserved by unbroken succession in the Catholic Church.” According to Cardinal Bellarmine, who reduces the controversy between [Roman] Catholics and Protestants [whom he calls heretics] to two points, is quite correct when he says: “The first is, we assert that all necessary doctrine, concerning faith or morals, is not expressly contained in the Scriptures: and therefore we maintain that, beside the *written* word of God, there is, moreover, needed the *unwritten* word—that is to say, divine and

apostolical traditions.” But *they* [Protestants] teach that all things necessary for faith and morals are contained in Scripture, and, therefore, that there is no need of the unwritten word.”^{*}

Now, before proceeding any further, it is necessary, in order to avoid misapprehension, to understand clearly what is meant by the word *tradition*, in the sense in which alone it is rejected by the united Church of England and Ireland. Tradition, then, as here employed, denotes a *divine revelation concerning matters of faith or morals, not contained in the written word of God*; but equally certain, equally divine, equally to-be-reverenced, and, consequently, equally obligatory with Scripture itself. In other words, Scripture and Tradition are co-ordinate, independent, and equally venerable sources of doctrine: either of which without the other is not sufficient for salvation. It is in this sense—as an authority upon matters of faith equal to and independent of Scripture—that the Church of these realms rejects tradition. There are other senses of the word, as we shall see hereafter, in which that Church receives with due respect the authority of ancient tradition. It must also be carefully observed, that the reason why Protestants reject traditions relating to matters of faith, is not *merely* because such doctrines are not contained in Scripture, but because there neither is nor can be certain evidence that they proceeded from our Lord or his inspired messengers. We know perfectly well that a doctrine is, in itself, neither more nor less the word of God for being written or unwritten. We are fully aware that the doctrines now contained in Scripture were, for some time, *unwritten traditions*.[§] We are, consequently, quite prepared to receive, as authoritative and obligatory, any unwritten tradition, *provided* it can be shown by *unquestionable proof* to be derived from an inspired origin. We unhesitatingly repeat, that if any doctrine, not contained in Scripture, be offered to us by the Church of Rome, and be, at the same time, *authenticated as incontestably as Scripture is*, we will not refuse to accept it as part of our creed. But until it be shown that there are divine and apostolical traditional doctrines, not expressly or implicitly contained in Scripture; that, in accordance with the famous rule of Vincentius of Lerins, a clear, unbroken, universal belief of such doctrines has prevailed in the Church, during all ages, from the first; until this be shown, we dare not expose ourselves to the fearful anathema pronounced by the Apostle St. John, in closing the canon of the Bible, against those who presume to

* This distinction between divine and apostolical traditions is founded on the decree of the Council of Trent above quoted—divine traditions denoting those proceeding from Christ himself; apostolical, those proceeding from the Apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The latter, however, as coming from an inspired source, may also be termed divine, and are so designated by some Roman Catholic divines—e.g., Perrone, *Loc. Theol. Pars. ii.*, sec. 2.

† Bellarm. *de verbo Dei*, Lib. IV., cap. 3. This famous writer informs us further, that when his Church speaks of the unwritten word, or Tradition, in contradistinction to the written word, or Scripture, it is not meant that traditional doctrines are *noctiæ* written; but only that they were not written by their *first authors* (i. e. cap. 2). The early Fathers of the Church are supposed to have committed these traditions to writing, from which *modus concordiae* they have been designated in the Decree concerning Purgatory, passed in the 25th Session of the Council of Trent, “the ancient tradition of the Fathers” (antiquæ Patrum traditio). A catalogue of the Fathers, whose writings are looked upon as the principal depositories of the unwritten word, is given by Cardinal Baronius in his *Ann. Eccles.*, tom. I., p. 412—418. His limitation, however, of dogmatic tradition to doctrines recorded by the earlier Fathers, having been found to be an embarrassing restriction, has been abandoned by the more modern Roman Catholic theologians.

‡ Protestants do not, of course, reject traditions *so far as they agree with Scripture*. But, on the other hand, we deny that such *intrinsic* traditions, as they have been termed, are necessary to those who admit the authority of Scripture. If Scripture be once allowed to be inspired, its testimony is amply sufficient without them. It is quite true that the general consent of the early Christians, as to the truth of any doctrine, that of the atonement, for instance, is a strong *collateral* proof of the *matter of fact* that the inspired preachers of the Gospel taught that doctrine, and that our Scriptures, which contain it, are genuine. But this consent does not *make* the doctrine true: its truth depends solely on its being revealed by God.

§ Dr. Milner, indeed, following Bellarmine, appears to have thought that Scripture was by far the less important of the two, or rather not at all essential. “The Christian doctrine and discipline,” he says, “might have been propagated and preserved by the unwritten word, or tradition, joined with the authority of the Church, though the Scriptures had not been composed, however profitably these most certainly are.” &c.—End of Controv. Let. x. The passage of Irenæus, which Dr. Milner quotes in connection with this remark, we shall notice hereafter.

make unauthorized additions to the word of God—“I testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: if any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book.”—Apoc. xxii. 18.*

Having thus explained the *nature of the controversy* between Protestants and Roman Catholics respecting the rule of faith, we may now proceed to examine, as much in detail as our limits will permit, the arguments adduced on both sides, with a view to ascertain on which side reason and Scripture are to be found. The question at issue is one of the highest moment, involving as it does the very basis of our faith; so that its discussion may well bespeak the serious and patient attention of every one who is alive to the importance of being able, before men and before the Searcher of hearts, to give a reason of the hope that is in him. We propose, then, to devote the remainder of the present article to a brief statement of some of the arguments on which Protestants rely in support of the position that Scripture alone, without Tradition, is sufficient for all the essentials of salvation. These arguments may be classed under the four following heads:—*Firstly*. The nature and the design of Scripture. *Secondly*. The testimony of Scripture to its own sufficiency. *Thirdly*. The inadequacy of oral tradition, as a vehicle for the transmission of doctrinal truths. *Fourthly*. The testimony of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

I. Scripture is the word of God, and was written by his authority. The Council of Trent “receives all the books as well of the New as of the Old Testament, because that one God is the *author of both*.”—Sess. iv. The New Testament Scripture was written, then, not *casually*, or by the momentary impulse of the Evangelists and Apostles, but in accordance with the deliberate will and design of God. Some Roman Catholic divines,† indeed, in order to deduce an argument from the *occasional origin* of the books of Scripture against its being designed as a complete standard of faith, insist much on the fact that we nowhere read in Scripture of our Lord’s commanding the Evangelists or Apostles to *write* the truths which they were commissioned to *preach*. But, without dwelling on the obvious tendency of this assertion to undermine the great truth of the inspiration of the New Testament, it is sufficient to observe that it contradicts not only the spirit [See Luke i. 3, 4; 2 Pet. i. 15; Is. xxx. 8.], but the letter [See Apoc. i. 11] of Scripture: and that it is at variance with the declaration of the Council of Trent, just quoted, and with the express statements of several of the ancient Fathers.‡ Now, for what imaginable purpose could the New Testament have been written by the will and direction of God, except for preserving to all future ages an authentic record of his revealed word? Roman Catholics deny that Scripture was intended to be a *judge in controversy*, or to *teach* the Gospel.§ They show abundantly that many have made an *evil use* of Scripture, and have attempted to support their errors by its words.|| The question, then, returns with still greater force—Why did God command the Scripture to be written? No other reason can be assigned than that just stated—viz., to *preserve an authentic record of His revelation*. But if this be so, it will be very difficult to account for *only a part of this revelation* having been thus perpetuated;

* This is one of the great arguments of Roman Catholic theologians in favour of Tradition; and they taunt Protestants with inconsistency, in receiving one set of oral traditions whilst they reject another. The answer, however, is obvious. We receive the traditions recorded in the Bible, because they were recorded by persons divinely commissioned and inspired to do so. We reject all other doctrinal traditions, because, if they existed whilst the Bible was being written, they must have been designedly omitted by the inspired penmen as unnecessary.

† Bellarmine, *de Verbo Dei*, iv. 3. Milner, *End of Controv.*, Let. viii. Treviran. *Disc. Amic.*, i. 180.

‡ Thus, for instance, Irenæus says (*Cont. Haer. lib. iii. c. 1*). “Which [Gospel] they [the Apostles] then indeed *preached*; but afterwards, by the *will of God*, handed down to us in the *Scriptures*, to be the pillar and ground of our faith”—(quod *Evangelium* tunc quidem preconveniunt [Apostoli], postea vero per Dei voluntatem in *Scripturis nobis tradiderunt*, fundamentum et columnam fidelis futurum). St. Augustine also says (*de Cons. Evang.*, lib. i. c. 35), “Whatever our blessed Lord wished us to read of his actions and words, this he commanded to be written by them [His Apostles] as if by his own hands”—(quicquid ille de suis factis et dictis nos legere voluit, hoc scribendum illis tanquam suis manusibus imperavit).

§ Tournay, *Prel. Theol. de Ecccl. Christi*, i. 281, sq.; Bally Tract. *de Ecccl. Chr. i. 294, sq.*

|| Milner, *End of Contr. let. viii.*; Delahogue, *de Eccles.*, p. 90.

* Acts xvi. 30, Douay Bible, from which all our Scripture quotations are made.

† “Ounnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, neconon tradiciones ipsas, tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur [sc. Tridentina Synodus].”

especially as most Roman Catholics admit that the Old Testament Scriptures contain the *whole* of the extant revelations made by God during the elder dispensation.* That some truths should be committed to writing, whilst others equally necessary (according to the Roman Catholic view) were left with totally unequal evidence,† is such an interruption of the general harmony of the divine proceedings, and of the special analogy just noticed with respect to the Old Testament, that we cannot admit its probability without positive and clear evidence that it was God's design to transmit His revelation by these different channels. Vague assertions about the *possibility* of doctrines equally necessary being intended to be conveyed by totally different and unequal vehicles will not suffice. In the utter absence, then, of anything like positive proof of so startling a proposition, we must conclude the *sufficiency* of Scripture from its *existence*. And when we further call to mind that Scripture does make very particular mention of many things which are admitted to be not essential to salvation, such as several rites and temporary regulations, the improbability of the omission of any *necessary* articles of faith is rendered still more apparent.

II. We come next to the evidence which Scripture itself bears to its own sufficiency. Between Roman Catholics and Protestants there is no dispute as to the authority of the parts of the Bible from which this evidence is taken; so that the testimony of Scripture on its own behalf is here admissible. But, on the other hand, both sides have appealed to the evidence of Scripture on the subject before us—Roman Catholics maintaining that it bears witness to its own *insufficiency*, whilst Protestants assert the very reverse. We shall quote at present a few of the many passages adduced by the latter, reserving for subsequent consideration those referred to by Roman Catholics.

Deut. iv. 2—“You shall not add to the word that I speak † to you, neither shall you take away from it.” Josh. i. 8—“Let not the book of this law depart from thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayest observe and do all things that are written in it: then shall thou direct thy way, and understand it.”

Ps. xviii. 8 (xix. 7 in Prot. vers.)—“The law of the Lord is unspotted [Hebrew, *perfect*], converting souls.”

John v. 39—“Search the Scriptures, § for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me.”

Rom. xv. 4—“For what things soever were written, were written for our learning, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

2 Tim. iii. 15-17—“And because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice. That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.”||

The above and similar passages undoubtedly assert or imply the necessity, perfection, and sufficiency of the *written* word of God, without the aid of Tradition either as a supplement or an interpreter. It may, indeed, be said, as it has been, that some of them relate only to the Pentateuch, and all of them to the *Old* Testament; and that, consequently, if they establish the sufficiency of Scripture, they prove the *Old* Testament, and even the five books of Moses, to be sufficient without the *New* Testament, and, therefore, prove too much. We answer, that the inference which we deduce from such passages as the above is *not*, that the partial and gradual revelations which it pleased God to make, from time to time, before the advent of the Messiah, are perfect and sufficient in the sense of superseding the necessity of a fuller and more complete manifestation of the Divine will: this would be a contradiction in terms: but our inference is that, in the case of every partial revelation, including the entire of the *Old* Testament, the *written* word is declared to be, alone and exclusively, necessary and sufficient for *all* the purposes which God designed such partial revelations to fulfil; and we conclude, by analogy, that the same is *true* of the final and complete revelation made under the Christian dispensation. The utter silence of Scripture, in the above and kindred passages,

respecting *unwritten* revelation, is the strongest evidence that no such thing was recognised by Moses, Joshua, David, our Blessed Lord, or St. Paul. This conclusion is fortified when we recollect that *Scripture*, and it alone, is appealed to in the Bible as the *criterion of truth*. Thus, in the *Old* Testament, the appeal was “To the law and to the testimony. And if they speak not according to this word, they shall not have the morning light.”—Is. viii. 20. And in the *New*, we read that the Bereans “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures whether these things were so.”—Acts xvii. 11. But we may state the case still more strongly. The Scripture is more than silent upon this subject. Tradition is occasionally mentioned, but almost always with *disprobation*.* Thus our Lord says to the Pharisees (Mark vii. 8, 9)—“For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men. Well do you make void the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition.” It is not a sufficient answer to say, that the traditions here condemned are either repugnant to God's law or frivolous, and, therefore, have nothing in common with the divine traditions committed to the custody of the Catholic Church. For although it is quite true that the Pharisaical traditions here condemned were either repugnant to God's word or frivolous; still it is equally true that the Pharisees maintained their *divine* origin, asserting that they were the unwritten word of God, handed down from the time of Ezra, through the Doctors of the law and the members of the Great Synagogue; and so represented them as a supplement to the written word. Yet our Blessed Lord reprobated them in the most unqualified terms, and that, too, on the broad ground that they were traditions of *men*, as contradistinguished to the commandments of God. Had it been His intention to leave a portion of His own revelation to the safe keeping of oral tradition He would surely have taken occasion here to obviate an almost unavoidable prejudice against such a mode of transmission, arising from His own words, by making that distinction between true and false traditions which Roman Catholics are here compelled to call to their aid. There are, lastly, a number of texts which plainly intimate that the object of committing the word of God to writing was that men should not be left to the vagueness and uncertainty of oral tradition. Thus St. Luke tells Theophilus—“It seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed”—Luke i. 3, 4. St. John also says—“But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name.”—John xx. 31. Again, when St. Peter knew that he was near his end, he wrote his second Epistle, in order, as he himself expresses it, “That after my decease also you may often have whereby you may keep a memory of these things.”—2 Pet. i. 15.† (See also Is. xxx. 8, and the other passages referred to below.)

III. But what is the reason why Scripture disconcentances oral traditions, or, at least, omits all allusion to them as co-ordinate authority with the written word? This brings us to our third argument, in support of the Protestant principle of recognising the sufficiency of Scripture alone—namely, the inadequacy of oral tradition as a means for safely transmitting doctrines.§

That oral tradition is, generally speaking, a most precarious vehicle for the accurate transmission even of *facts*, which are capable of being most fully known, every one readily admits. Much more is this the case with respect of *opinions* or *doctrines* which, almost inevitably, receive some colouring in passing through the minds of those who report them. It is notorious that the most honest and trustworthy hearers of the self-same words will often vary materially from each other in the report which they give of them, even under the solemn sanction of an oath, almost immediately after they have been uttered. How vastly this inherent uncertainty is increased by the numerous sources of error arising from lapse of time, distance of place, prejudice, interest, and so forth, it is needless to dwell on. Some of these evils, connected with oral transmission, no amount of care can guard against or remedy. It may, accordingly, be safely asserted, that it would require a *continued miracle* to preserve, for any length of time, traditional doctrines from even undesigned corruption. Is it, then, conceivable that God would permit important truths, affecting the eternal welfare of His creatures, to be exposed to the inevitable dangers attending such a mode of conveyance as this:|| especially as there exists a com-

* From the allusions which occur in various passages of the New Testament to Jewish traditions, not contained in the Old Testament, it has been inferred by some Roman Catholic controversialists (e.g., Personae Loc. Theol., Pars II., sec. ii. c. 1), that, under the old dispensation, no less than the new, tradition was a co-ordinate authority with Scripture. This inference, however, is rather insinuated than broadly stated.

† Roman Catholics cannot fairly deny that the combined evidence of Scripture and tradition is stronger than that of tradition alone. If the latter were sufficient by itself, we can hardly suppose that Scripture, which is exposed to such grave inconveniences as they allege, would have been employed at all.

‡ The correct translation of the word here rendered *speak* is *command*, as the Protestant version has it, and also the Douay itself at Deut. vi. 6. The reason why the Douay translators here adopted the former term may be collected from Bellarmine, who, on the assumption that the original word means *speak*, argues that this passage applies only to the *unwritten* word!||

§ See the remarks on this text in our second number, page 14.

|| For a full discussion of these and kindred passages, see Whitaker, Disputation on Scripture, Quest. vi, chaps. xiv. xv.

paratively safe and unexceptionable* vehicle, of which His inspired messengers were expressly directed to avail themselves in the case of other essential verities?

But, it may be said,† God did permit the primitive religion, for many centuries, to be handed down solely by tradition (the art of writing being unknown till the age of Moses); why, then, may not the same be the case, to some extent, under the Christian dispensation? Now we might reply to this, that there is no certain evidence of the art of writing being totally unknown until the time of Moses, and, consequently, of oral tradition being the sole vehicle by which the primitive revelations were transmitted. But, even admitting the assumed fact, we answer, that, without presuming to inquire into all the reasons why God saw fit to intrust His early revelations to the keeping of oral tradition, there were circumstances connected with the patriarchal times which conferred upon them peculiar advantages for the safe transmission of unwritten truths, and such as never could be shared by subsequent ages. The *truths* themselves were few and elementary; and the *long lives*‡ of the patriarchs served as a check on the dangers arising from successive oral communication, by furnishing a kind of *permanent standard*, by which it was possible, at all times, to adjust these truths. And yet, under a combination of favourable circumstances which never again can recur, tradition then proved an utterly inadequate means for the unimpaired transmission of divine revelation. Notwithstanding, that God kept up the memory of Himself, by *repeated* revelation—to Enoch and Noah—we find that so universally was religion corrupted in the age of Abraham (only a few centuries after the Flood), that it was necessary to make a new revelation to him.§ This again was repeated to his immediate descendants, Isaac and Jacob; and yet, in the interval between the death of Joseph and the mission of Moses (only a few generations), the faith again appears to have been corrupted, if not lost.|| Here, then, was a trial of oral Tradition under the most favourable circumstances that can be conceived, and a complete proof of its inadequacy to preserve inviolate the sacred deposit of divine truth. Just as the earlier revelations were themselves partial, and, compared with the subsequent ones, imperfect, so was the mode of transmitting them also permitted to be imperfect. This is quite in accordance with the principle of gradual progression, which we can trace in all God's dealings with us. St. Paul tells us that the law of Moses was “our pedagogue in Christ” (i.e., our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ), and, in the same way, we may conclude, God designed that the imperfections of oral tradition should be fully proved, and that, on this account, it was permitted to be preliminary and introductory to the safer and more perfect mode which He himself substituted for it, when He imparted a new and fuller revelation to Moses. With His own finger he wrote the ten commandments, brief and simple as they were, on tables of stone, in order that they might remain imperishably recorded.¶ Having thus solemnly initiated the future vehicle of divine truth, He commanded Moses to commit to writing all the other precepts which He vouchsafed to communicate. The Book of the Law, thus written, was deposited in the most sacred part of the sanctuary (Deut. xxxi. 26), and most carefully guarded as a treasure of inestimable value. Thus, then, by God's own ordinance, Scripture was substituted for Tradition, although, as it has been well observed, there were many circumstances connected with the Mosaic law which gave it peculiar facilities for being orally handed down.** In a similar manner, during the prophetic period, the prophets were repeatedly directed to commit to writing the messages with which they were charged. Thus we read (Is. xxx. 8)††—“Now, therefore, go in and note it diligently in a book, and it shall be in

sufficient, at present, to answer, that such an exhibition of miraculous power, for the attainment of an end which might be compassed by the employment of ordinary means, is directly opposed to an admitted law of the Divine administration, scil. Economy in the use of miraculous agency.

* Roman Catholic objections to Scripture, derived from the various abuses of it, are not legitimate grounds of exception.

† This is a favourite argument with Roman Catholic divines—e.g., Bellarmine, Milner, and Delahogue.

‡ Two persons—Methuselah and Shem—might have conveyed the primeval revelation from Adam to Abraham.

§ We learn, from Josh. xxiv. 2, that Abraham's fathers were idolators. We know, from Gen. xxxii. 10, 30, that his nephew, Laban, was one.

|| The exact religious state of the Israelites, at the time of Moses, mission, it would be difficult to ascertain. From the intimation, however, given in Exod. iii. 13, we may safely conclude that their knowledge of God was, at least, very much dimmed and obliterated.

¶ Some learned men have thought that alphabetic writing was entirely unknown down to this period; and that it was now miraculously communicated for the very purpose of furnishing a safe and permanent medium for the transmission of God's word.

** It is sufficient to notice first, the circumstances of terrific grandeur which accompanied the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, and which, from their very nature, were calculated to produce a powerful and lasting impression. Secondly. The various rites and anniversary festivals instituted in commemoration of the giving of the laws, or illustrative of its various provisions. Thirdly. The fixing the chief seat of the religion in a single locality. Fourthly. The establishment of a divinely instituted priesthood, whose sole business it was to provide for the due observance and perfect conservation of the religion. Fifthly. The continuance of visible characters of God's miraculous presence—especially the Shechinah, or cloud of glory over the mercy-seat, and the oracular responses given by the Uriel and Thummim.—See Ep. Burnet on the 6th Art.

†† See also Is. viii. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 2, 28, 32; Hab. ii. 2.

the latter days for a testimony for ever;" where, it is to be observed, the reason of the injunction is also given—namely, that the words which the prophet delivered might be preserved for future generations. Accordingly, we know nothing—and the fact is a remarkable one, considering the partiality of the later Jews for oral tradition—of the teaching of any of the prophets, save only what is handed down to us by *written* tradition—viz., the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

If, then, it pleased God to permit a trial to be made, under the most favourable possible circumstances, of the adequacy of oral tradition as a means of securely handing down His revelations; if, upon the total failure of this experiment, He himself introduced, and expressly commanded the continuance of a new and more perfect mode of conveyance; is it reasonable to suppose that in the last, the most perfect, and the only universal revelation of His will, designed for all times and all nations, He would sanction even a partial return to the defective and precarious mode of transmission, which, by His own express injunctions, had been for many centuries discontinued? The bare statement of such a supposition is sufficient to show its utter improbability.

But we are here met by the assertion* that the objections to Tradition, based upon the inherent uncertainty of oral communication, and the unavoidable disturbing influences to which it is exposed, do not apply to the tradition for which Roman Catholics contend. They hold, it is said, that the unwritten word was committed not to any particular fallible individuals, but to the bishops and the whole body of the Catholic Church, to which Christ himself imparted the character of infallibility and indefectibility. In other words, the channel, through which the divine and apostolical traditions are transmitted, is secured by the great Head of the Church from every possible danger. The statements of the 20th Article of the Church of England, respecting the authority and office of the Church, are also sometimes brought against Protestants to prove that they virtually admit the Catholic Church to possess the power here claimed for her.

Our limits preclude us at present from doing more than noticing the above so-called unassailable bulwark of Tradition; but we hope, in our next number, to return to the subject, and to complete our proof that the Church of England is justified in asserting, that "Holy Scripture containeth *all* things necessary to salvation: to that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite as necessary to salvation."

IS THE CHURCH OF ROME JUSTIFIED IN WITHHOLDING THE EUCHARISTIC CUP FROM THE LAITY?

This is a grave question, and one in which laymen, for whom we write, have a deep interest. If receiving the holy Eucharist be the most solemn duty of the Christian religion, enjoined upon all his faithful disciples by the Saviour himself, the receiving it *right* must be a matter of the utmost moment; and an avoidable error in it can be little short of *sacrilege*. In expressing this opinion we are doing no more than eminent popes have themselves done, and are almost using their very language.

Pope Gelasius I., who did not die till A.D. 496, expressly says, that to minister the communion in one kind is open *sacrilege*—“We have found that some, having received only the portion wherein is the holy body, abstain from the cup of the sacred blood; who, without doubt (forasmuch as I know not with what superstition they are taught), should receive the *whole sacrament*, or be kept from the *whole*; because the *division* of one and the same mystery cannot come without *great sacrilege*.†

And Pope Leo the Great (to whom we have already referred on another important subject) in treating of the Manicheans, writes thus:—“They withdraw themselves from the sacrament of our salvation. With unworthy mouth they receive Christ's body; but they altogether refuse to *drink the blood of our redemption*, which things we would advertise you of, that both such men may be manifested by these tokens unto you, and also that they, being brought to light, may be *thrust out of the church* by *sacerdotal authority*.†

This denunciation of two eminent popes will, no doubt, startle many of our readers, who are, doubtless, under the conviction that the practice of reserving the sacramental cup for the clergy alone is as ancient as the earliest traditions of the Church, and based upon the divine authority of either our Blessed Lord himself, or, at least, of his immediate Apostles. Is it not as-

serted by the Church of Rome that all the doctrines and usages of the church are derived either from the written Word of God, or traditions derived from the earliest age of Christianity? Do not most Roman Catholic laymen believe that they are so? Whether they are, in this instance, so derived and so supported, is the question we wish to inquire into, and get at the real truth about. We believe we may, without fear of contradiction, commence by stating, that all parties agreed that our Blessed Lord instituted the Eucharist under two kinds. St. Matt. xxvi. 26—“And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to his disciples, and said: take ye and eat; this is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.” It would appear that our Lord laid greater emphasis on the participation of the cup, by enjoining them *all* to drink of it, than on that of the bread, which he distributed, not with a general injunction, such as “take ye *all* and eat,” but with this simple precept, “take, eat;” and as St. Matthew reports him to have said, “drink ye *ALL* of this, so St. Mark (xiv. 23) relates that “they *all* drank of it,” which shows the strict observance of the command, and the importance attached to it in the minds of the holy Apostles, who, it must be recollect, were indisputably under the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit himself; who, if errors or abuses were to arise in his Church in after ages, doubtless, in his infinite wisdom, foresaw them, and was thus particular, with a view to their prevention. We venture to assert, that there is not a single passage in the Holy Scriptures which affords any safe ground for a contrary practice, for we consider it by no means clear that the *breaking of bread*, spoken of in such passages as Luke xxiv. 30, Acts ii. 42, Acts xx. 7, at all refers to the Eucharist, any more than Mark vi. 41, Matt. xiv. 19, Mark viii. 6, when our Lord blessed and brake the loaves and gave them to his disciples long before the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. To *break bread* was a phrase familiar to the Jews, and implied a distribution of it, meaning no more than sitting at meat with them; and such passages, therefore, afford no argument for withholding the sacramental cup from all but the clergy.

We are nearly as confident that there is nothing in the early Fathers to countenance what Pope Leo and Pope Gelasius so expressly and strongly condemned; but, on the contrary, we mean to show, that in the primitive ages of Christianity, the laity were in the habit of complying with our Lord's injunction, by receiving the Eucharist in both kinds.

St. Jerome tells of the “body of our Lord being carried in a basket, and the blood in a glass vessel, to relieve the poor.” St. Basil says, “that it is good and profitable to partake every day of the blessed body and blood of Christ.”‡ And where he treats of the peculiar virtues of Christians, he asks—“What is proper to him who eats the bread, and drinks the cup of Christ?”

St. Chrysostom draws no distinction between the priest and the laity; but compares all Christians in general with the Israelites—“As thou eatest the body of Christ, so did they manna: as thou drinkest the blood of Christ, so did they water out of the rock.”‡ Again—“It is not now as under the Jewish law, when the priest partook of several things from the altar which the people did not: *there is no difference between the priest and the people* when we come to receive the holy mysteries, for one body and *one cup* is offered to *all*.”§

It would be easy to multiply testimony on this point from the Fathers, but it appears to be needless, and we prefer proceeding at once to show the true origin of the modern practice of the Church of Rome, and the date of its final ratification, which did not take place till the Council of Constance, A.D. 1414. The doctrine of communion in one kind had, about two centuries before, begun to be agitated by the clergy; and towards the middle of the 13th century, St. Thomas Aquinas, so distinguished for scholastic subtleties, reduced it to a tangible shape, and first proposed the question, as a subject of disputation—viz., whether it was allowable to take the body of Christ *without* the blood, as it was customary with many churches to do so—at the same time admitting that, according to the custom of the ancient church, all persons, as they partook of the body, so they also partook of the blood.”||

Cardinal Bona admits that, from the origin of the Church to the 12th age, Christians, at all times and in every place, communicated under the species of *bread and wine*.|| And Cardinal Bellarmine (De Euch. lib. iv. c. 4) virtually admits the same thing, when alleging the *excuse* for the change—viz., “that the inconvenience became more and more apparent as the

* See Perrone, Loc. Theol. pars ii. sec. 2. cap. i.

† Comperimus autem quod quidam, sumpta tantum modo corporis sacri portione, a caeteris sacrae unctionis abstineant. Qui proculdubio, (quoniam nesciunt quae superstitione docentur obstringi) aut integras sacramenta percipiunt, aut ab integris arreantur: quia divisio unius ejusdemque mysterii sine grandi sacrilegio non potest provenire.—Gelas. in Corp. Jur. Canon. Lugd. 1661. Decret. Grat. Tert. Pars. de Consecr. Dist. ii. cap. 12. Col. 1168.

‡ Abdicant enim se sacramento salutis humanae. Ore indigne Christi corpus accipiunt: sanguinem autem redemptiois nostris haud omni modo declinant. Quod ideo restram volumus scire sanctitatem, ut vobis hujuscemodi homines his manifestantur indicis, et notati et profiti a sanctorum societate sacerdotali auctoritate pellatur.—Leon. Mag. Op. Lut. 1623. Col. 108. Serm. iv. de quadrag.

multitude of communicants increased, and so the *custom* under both species gradually ceased.”

The nature of the inconveniences, and also the justification pleaded by the Church of Rome for sanctioning, at the Councils of Constance and Trent, what Pope Leo the Great and Pope Gelasius considered *sacrilege*, and deserving of *excommunication*, are both deserving of observation. The former we think futile in the extreme, indeed so trifling, that nothing but a dark and superstitious age could have considered them grave enough to justify a departure from primitive usage, based upon the express commands of our Lord himself. Will our readers believe that, among the *inconveniences* referred to, as justifying the change, were the following? To avoid the risk of spilling the wine, and the indecency which arose of communicants dipping their beards into it; lest the wine kept for the sick should turn sour; or some persons should not be able to bear its smell and taste, and the like!

We might well smile at such trifling excuses for departing from the established usage of many centuries, did we not think, with Pope Gelasius, that to depart from an express command of our Divine Master, touching the most solemn ordinance of his holy religion, and to establish a new practice at variance with it, is too like open rebellion against Christ to be treated lightly, even though the Council of Constance, A.D. 1414, ventured to oppose its authority to that of the Divine Founder of the institution. Did the Council of Constance deny that our Lord so instituted it? So far from it, the decree of that council sets out with acknowledging “that Christ instituted and administered this blessed sacrament to his disciples in both kinds, of bread and wine. . . . and admitting, that in the primitive Church the faithful received it in *both kinds*;” and yet goes on to sanction by its authority the *very reverse*. To show that we are not misrepresenting the decree of the Council of Constance, we think it right to subjoin, in a note, an accurate copy of it in the original Latin, of which the following is a translation:—

“Whereas in some parts of the world there are some who presume rashly to assert that Christian people ought to take the sacrament of the Eucharist under both species of bread and wine, and that the laity should communicate not only under the species of bread, but also under the species of wine; also that they should receive it after supper, or at least not fasting, &c., &c.: hence it is, that this present sacred general council, lawfully congregated, in the Holy Spirit, at Constance, taking care to provide for the safety of the faithful against this error, after mature deliberation of those learned in both divine and human law, *declares, decrees, and defines* that, although Christ did institute this venerable sacrament after supper, and administered it to his disciples under each species of bread and wine, nevertheless, notwithstanding this (*hoc non obstante*) the laudable authority of the sacred canons and the approved custom of the Church, has held, and does hold, that this sacrament should not be consecrated after supper, nor received by the faithful except fasting, unless in case of infirmity, or other necessity, by law or the Church conceded and admitted. And as this *custom* was reasonably introduced to avoid some dangers and scandals, although, in the *primitive church*, this sacrament was received by the faithful under each species, henceforth let it be received by those consecrating it under each species, but by the *laity* only under the species of bread, &c. Whence, since a custom of this sort was reasonably introduced by the Church and holy Fathers, and has been very long observed, let it be taken for *law*, which it is not lawful to disapprove, or to change at pleasure, without the authority of the Church. Wherefore to say that to observe this custom or law is sacrilegious, or unlawful, ought to be deemed erroneous, and those pertinaciously asserting the contrary of the foregoing, ought to be repelled as *heretics*, and severely punished by the diocesans of the place, or their officials, or the *inquisitors* of heretical depravity, in the kingdoms or provinces in which anything shall happen to be attempted or presumed against this decree, according to the canonical and lawful sanctions wholly or somewhat framed in favour of the Catholic faith, and against heretics and their adherents.”*

* Cum in nonnullis mundi partibus, quidam temerarie asserere pre-uant, populum Christianum debere sumere Eucharistia sacramentum, sub utraque panis et vini specie susciperi, et non solum sub specie panis, sed etiam sub specie vini, populum latum passim communicant, etiam post cenam vel alias non jejunum, &c., &c. hinc est quod hoc presens concilium sacram generale Constant. in spiritu sancto legitime congregatum, aduersus hunc errorum salutis fidem provideat satiatis, matura plurim doctorum, tunc divini quam humani juris, deliberatione prehabeat, declarat, decernit, et diffinit, quod licet Christus post cenam instituerit, et suis discipulis administraverit, sub utraque specie panis et vini, hoc venerabiliter sacramentum, tamen hoc non obstante, sacrorum canonum auctoritas laudabilis, et approbata consuetudo ecclesie servavit et servat, quod hujus modi sacramentum non debet confici post cenam neque a fidelibus recipi non jejunum, nisi in casu infirmitatis, alterius necessitatis, a jure vel ecclesie concessa vel admisso. Et sicut haec consuetudo ad extitum aliquia pericula et scandala est rationabiliter introducta, quod licet in primitive ecclesia huius modi sacramentum recipere a fidelibus sub utraque specie, postea a conficiensibus sub utraque, et a laicis tantummodo sub specie panis, suscipiantur, &c. Unde cum hujusmodi consuetudo ab ecclesia et sanctis patribus rationabiliter introducta, et diuinas observata sit, habenda est pro lege quam non licet reprehicare, aut sine ecclesiis anciatoritate pro libito mutare. Quapropter dicere, quod hanc consuetudinem aut legem observare, sit sacrilegum aut illicitum, censeri debet erroneum: et pertinaciter asserentes oppidum premissorum

* Qui Corpus Domini, canistro vimineo. Sanguinem portat in vitro. —Epist. ad Rust. Monach. Hieron. op. p. xc. Tom. iv. Pars. ii. Col. 777, 778.

† St. Chrysostom, op. Hom. xxiii in 1 Cor. vol. x. p. 203, Par. 1732.

‡ St. Chrysostom, op. Hom. xviii. in 2 Cor. Ibid. p. 568.

|| Secundum antiquae ecclesie consuetudinem omnes sicut communicabant corpore, ita et communicabant sanguine. Thos. Aquin. pars. 3. Qu. 80. Art. 12.

¶ Semper enim et ubique ab ecclesie primordiis usque ab secundum duodecimum, sub specie panis et vini communicaverunt.—Rer. Liturg. lib. ii. c. 18.